The Middlebury Campus

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NEWS IN BRIEF

STUDENT POPULATION TO DECREASE FOR SPRING SEMESTER

Bread Loaf will no longer house students

By CAT McLAUGHLIN
News Editor

With the graduation of a larger-than-usual Feb class and an increase in students studying abroad, the on-campus student population is expected to decrease for the spring semester — but will still be more than 150 students larger than an average year.

There will be about 2,660 on-campus learners during the upcoming semester, according to an email to The Campus from Dean of Students Derek Doucet. The total number of students is not yet finalized, as some students may be unable to go abroad or may choose to take a leave of absence. This estimate is down from the approximately 2,865 students on campus in the fall, though still higher than the roughly 2,500 that is typical for Middlebury, according to an email sent to the Middlebury community on Aug. 30, 2021.

There will be 190 graduating Febs, with an incoming Feb class of 115 students, according to Doucet. The graduating Feb class is larger than in previous years, incorporating into its ranks students who took time off due to the pandemic. There is also one exchange student arriving in February.

Ten students who were abroad in the fall will be on campus for the spring semester, and 47 students will depart for study

Continued on Page 2

MIDDLEBURY ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH QUESTBRIDGE

DALEELAH SALEH/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Dean of Admissions Nicole Curvin said the new partnership is an important step for the college's goals around access and equity.

By DALEELAH SALEH
Senior Opinions Editor

On Jan. 19, Middlebury announced its new partnership with QuestBridge, a nonprofit which offers full scholarships to low-income students who are matched with and admitted to selective universities. Middlebury's first QuestBridge Scholars will matriculate in fall 2023.

"This is an important partnership for Middlebury, and for realizing our shared goals with QuestBridge around access and equity in education," Dean of Admissions Nicole Curvin said in a press release. "We're a private institution, but we're also a public good. And a public good should be accessible to all. We look forward to our joint work ahead."

In addition to being a part of the college admissions and scholarship process in the fall of 2022, Middlebury will also participate in QuestBridge events throughout this year geared toward helping select high school juniors prepare for the college admissions process. "We are moved by Middlebury's commitment to making their campuses accessible, affordable, and welcoming to students from diverse backgrounds, and believe this partnership will offer QuestBridge scholars unique academic opportunities and life experiences," Ana McCullough, QuestBridge CEO and cofounder, said in the press release. "We are excited for our QuestBridge Scholars to join the exceptional community at Middlebury."

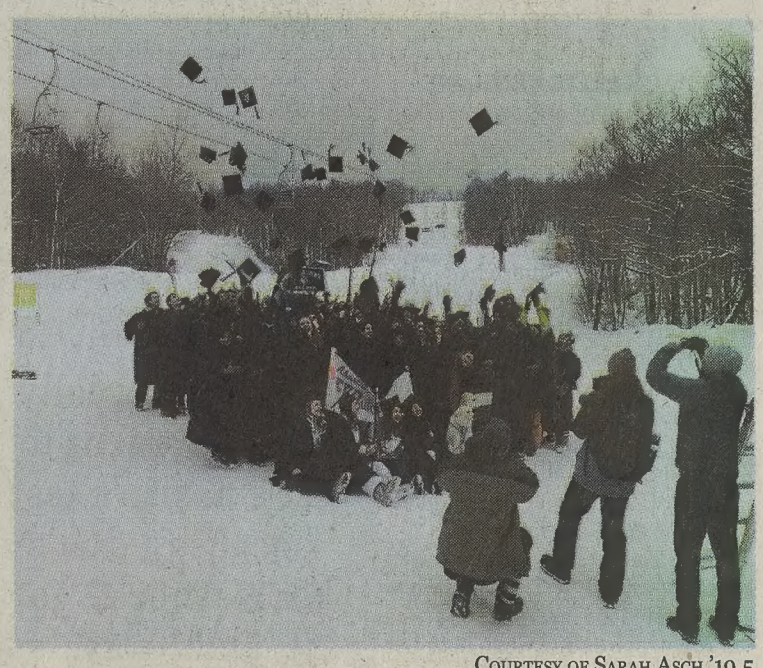
Amherst, Bowdoin, Colby, Hamilton, Tufts, Wesleyan and Williams are also QuestBridge partners, making Middlebury the eighth NESCAC school to join.

This partnership is one of several admissions initiatives designed to make Middlebury more accessible. Middlebury has been a Posse Partner since 1999, and recruits Posse scholars from New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. In addition, Middlebury also has a Student Ambassador program, which is designed to "to increase outreach and recruitment to high school students located in rural, low-income serving, and ethnically diverse areas," according to their website.

Continued on Page 2

Feb graduation to continue with some restrictions in place

By LAUREN THOMPSON
Contributing Writer



COURTESY OF SARAH ASCH '19.5

Middlebury is planning to hold the Feb graduation celebration ceremony followed by the ski-down procession for the Class of 2021.5 on Feb. 5, making the celebration the first traditional graduation ceremony for a Feb class since the one held for the 2019.5 class in February of 2020.

The event will be modified to accommodate current Covid-19 health and safety guidelines. In past years, the ceremony was held in the Middlebury Chapel, the same location as convocation for incoming Febs. This year, according to Molly Andres, interim director of the Event Management Office and member of the Feb Celebration Committee, the celebration will take place in Virtue Field House due to its more open setting and a higher quality ventilation system.

The larger venue is also helpful for hosting graduation for a larger-than-normal Feb class. Due to students taking semesters off during the pandemic, this year's Feb class has grown to 190 people, whereas a typical Feb class has about 115 students.

After skiing down the Snow Bowl, graduates and their families usually attend brunch in Proctor Dining Hall. That meal will be "to-go" to accommodate Covid-19 safety precautions, with seating available in the McCullough tent. While guest limits will not be in effect during the graduation ceremony, guests will be expected to adhere to health precautions in order to attend.

"Our invited guests are expected to comply with the current campus guidelines which include being fully vaccinated, wearing a mask indoors and staying home and watching remotely if they have tested positive for Covid-19 ten days prior to the event or have any Covid-19 symptoms," Andres said in an email to The Campus.

Some pre-graduation events planned for students in January have been eliminated completely due to Covid-19 and staffing shortages in the Student Activities Office. According to Feb Celebration Committee member Kaleb Ward '21.5, there was initially supposed to be a semi-formal mixer, a ski day and a dance party for students during the month of January, but all were canceled due to pandemic restrictions. Despite the modifications, Ward feels grateful for the commitment the school is showing thus far toward holding the ceremony.

"It makes me really happy because the last couple of years it seems like they were pretty willing to cancel everything," Ward said."So I'm glad that [this year] they are really pushing to make it happen."

Though the event will have to be adapted to adhere to pandemic safety precautions, many students in the Class of 2021.5 expressed acceptance for the limitations of

Continued on Page 2

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

Lake Dunmore Moonlight Ice Skating

FRANNIE NEWMAN '24

NEWS

Covid-19 positive students adjust to evolving guidelines
By CHARLIE KEOHANE

School Abroad in Morocco canceled for spring: Students go to Jordan instead
By BEN WAGNER

▶PAGE 2

LOCAL

Anonymous posters in town baffle residents
By JULIA PEPPER

Over the past several months, anonymous poster-sized images have appeared across the town of Middlebury. The two graphic images, one of the character...

▶ PAGE 4

OPINIONS

Letter to the Editor: In search of Middlebury Swing
By CALEB SMITH

Reflections from abroad: Love near and far
By EDYTH MOLDOW

▶ PAGE 6

ARTS & CULTURE

Reel Critic: Nightmare Alley
By JACK TORPEY

"Friends" on stage combines humor, '90s nostalgia and 2022 pandemic angst
By EMILY HOGAN

▶ PAGE 8

SPORTS

Kent Hughes '92, former Middlebury hockey star, named general manager of Montreal Canadiens
By CHARLES CROUNSE

After spending over 25 years as a National Hockey League agent, Kent Hughes '92 was named general manager...

▶ PAGE 11

COVID-19 POSITIVE STUDENTS ADJUST TO EVOLVING GUIDELINES

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Editor at Large

The college shortened the required isolation period from 10 to five days on Jan. 14 after nearly 100 students tested positive within the first week of J-Term. The new policy is in line with Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, and allowed students to shift their quarantine plans after the announcement.

Liza Toll '24 had not yet received her pre-arrival test results when she arrived on campus. She was in room quarantine when both her arrival and pre-arrival tests came back positive.

"It was a really scary moment to get a positive test because I don't know where I got it, and I wasn't expecting it," Toll said.

Toll received an email from Health Services that said "students who are able to isolate off-campus are required to do so," due to the limited isolation housing options available on campus. Since Toll both has a car on campus and lives within driving distance, she left to isolate at home.

However, Toll returned to campus five days earlier than she had initially planned, following the announcement of the shortened isolation period. She was relieved to be back on campus, but remained concerned about exposing other students to the virus.

"I was really nervous about exposing people around me because I did have mild symptoms, and I was worried about being contagious," Toll said. "It felt like the burden was very much on me to make responsible choices, and I tried to do that, but also, not everyone would necessarily do that. So it is a little concerning to me that people are potentially out and about after five days and maybe still exposing other people."

> "It was a really scary moment to get a positive test because I don't know where I got it, and I wasn't expecting it."

The change to a five-day quarantine was frustrating for others who were required to complete the full 10 days before the college announced the switch.

Josie Bourne '21.5 tested positive at home on Jan. 4, followed the five-day CDC isolation guidelines, and continued to wear a mask around her family and others for five days after.

"I had hoped to be able to return for all of J-Term, as I graduate this February, but the school insisted I complete a full 10-day quarantine as they had not acquired enough tests to supply everyone," Bourne said. "They informed me eventually that regardless of how I tested on a rapid at-home, I would need to finish out 10 days and arrive on campus on Day 11, which ended up being the first Saturday of J-Term."

Bourne said she was fortunate to be able to do independent study work from home but was upset to miss one of her last weeks on campus.

As a varsity swimmer, Mia Zottola '24 arrived on campus early for training but tested positive in late December after her arrival. She was moved into isolation housing, but her teammates had to provide her with food for a few days.

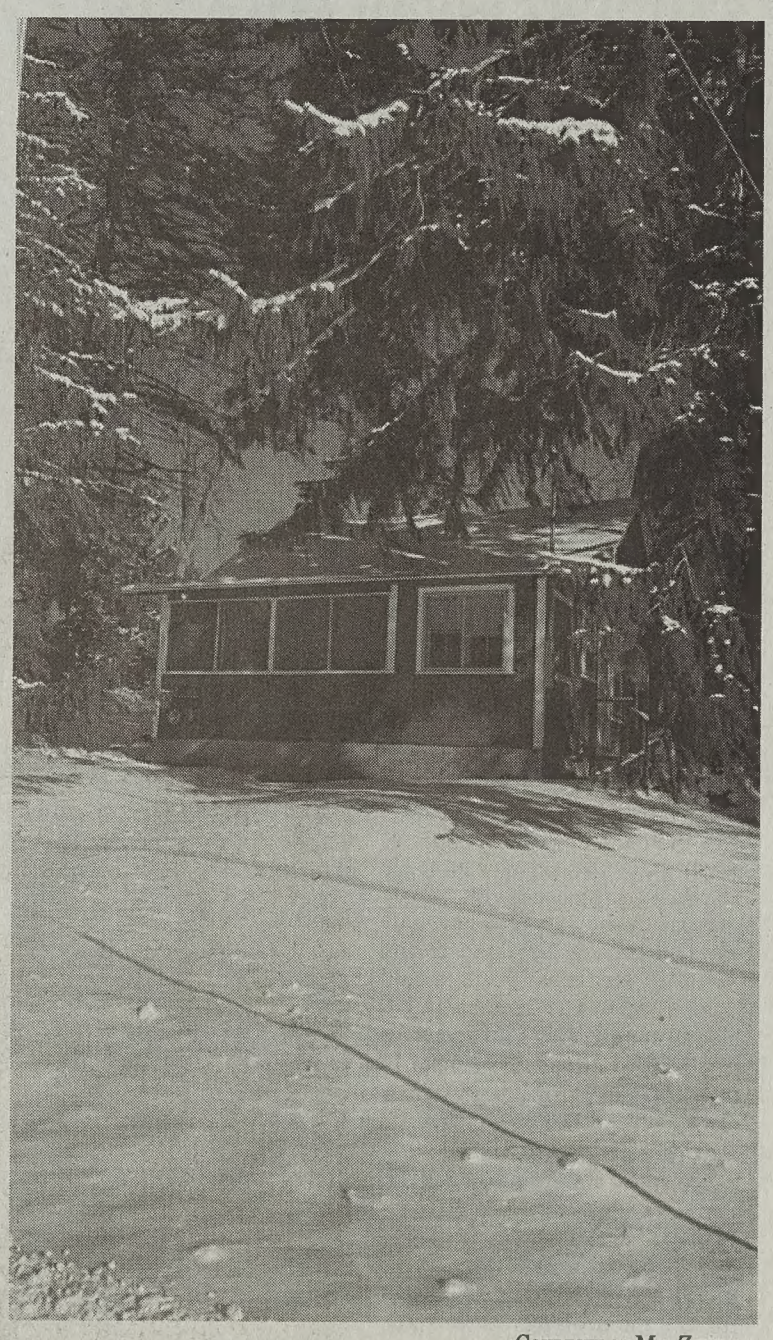
"The team did a good job taking care of me, like giving me food and keeping me occupied, but the school didn't do a lot until Jan. 4," Zottola said.

Despite these frustrations, many students attribute delays in communications to the high volume of cases and understaffing.

"It definitely was frustrating trying to get in touch and actually communicate with Health Services, which I'm sure was just because they are so overwhelmed and don't have enough people to deal with the number of cases they had," Toll said.

Bourne agreed that communication was difficult during isolation.

"It was frustrating communicating with the school, but I also understand it was a pretty chaotic transition — and they still managed to provide many avenues I could reach out to in order to seek information," she said. "My final take is just that to have the rules change the way they did after the fact was kind of painful — I lost a full week of my last month here as a result of unfortunate timing."



COURESTY OF MIA ZOTTOLA
Some students who test positive are relocated to deisgnated isolation housing, such as the house pictured above.

NEWS IN BRIEF

STUDENT POPULATION TO DECREASE FOR SPRING SEMESTER

Continued from Page 1

abroad after J-Term who did not already do so.

The abnormally high number of enrolled students in the fall meant that the college had to arrange housing at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Middlebury, and at the Bread Loaf campus. The college also purchased the Inn on the Green and converted it to student housing.

On Jan. 20, Bread Loaf residents received an email from Residential Life that said there will be enough housing on the main campus to accommodate current Bread Loaf residents; and therefore the college does not need or plan to offer housing at Bread Loaf for the spring semester.

Available housing options for these students include being pulled into existing suites with open beds, finding an open space in specialty housing or participating in a housing process during the final week of J-Term with other students changing housing mid-year. Facilities will offer support for transporting belongings.

The email also stated that the incentives offered to Bread Loaf residents — such as discounted room and board fees, priority in housing for next year, premium parking access and free access to the Snow Bowl and Rikert — would be honored for the entirety of the school year.

MIDDLEBURY ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH QUESTBRIDGE

Continued from Page 1

"At Middlebury, we're committed to a campus experience where all voices contribute to the conversations we have every day in our classrooms and labs, theaters, concert halls, and on our athletics fields," Middlebury President Laurie L. Patton said in a press release. "An inclusive community is a more creative one."

QuestBridge alumni are also able to participate in a match application process for graduate school and become part of a robust alumni network, which aims to ensure that they continue to have opportunities to succeed and thrive past college.

Feb graduation to continue with some restrictions in place

Continued from Page 1

the present circumstances.

Ben Beese '21.5 said that he was most excited to celebrate his four years at Middlebury with both his friends and family but has grown used to limiting expectations.

"I think that I'd like to have some sort of celebration, but I also understand that at this point it's the expectation that things are different than we may have expected, so I won't be surprised if it changes," Beese said.

Some students, however, say that the school should have been more transparent with students about the status of the event. "I'm still a little apprehensive that they are going to cancel last minute... I wish they would be more clear about whether or not there is a chance that they will cancel it," Ward said.

Andres remained optimistic about the celebration because the current logistics — such as access to Virtue Field House, skiing, snowboarding or hiking down the mountain in caps and gowns, and an outdoor meal — all currently align with Covid-19 guidelines. Andres urged students and family to refer to the Feb Celebration website for updates and questions regarding the status of the event.

COURESTY OF SARAH ASCH
Middlebury will hold the Feb graduation celebration ceremony followed by the ski-down procession for the class of 2021.5 class on Feb. 5. The ceremony will be the first traditional graduation ceremony for a Feb class since the 2019.5 class due to the pandemic.

School Abroad in Morocco canceled for spring, students go to Jordan instead

By BEN WAGNER
Staff Writer

COURESTY OF ELIZA FREEDMAN '23
Entrance to the University of Mohammed V, where the Middlebury School in Morocco is hosted.

Students planning to study abroad in the Kingdom of Morocco for the spring semester were informed on Jan. 3 that they would not be able to attend. Following the rapid spread of the Omicron variant in November 2021, Morocco closed its borders, initially for two weeks, on Nov. 29. The closure has since been extended through Jan. 31 and could be further lengthened in the coming weeks.

William Mayers, director of the Middlebury Schools in Morocco and Jordan, said that the college recognized when the closure was first extended that students might not be able to enter the Middlebury program in Morocco for their spring semester abroad.

"Before the fall term ended we began reaching out to the program in Jordan and to offices on campus to see what arrangements we could make for these spring semester students," Mayers said in an email to The Campus.

Makenna Janes '23 was planning to attend the School in Morocco this spring until Janes, along with other students, was told that the program had been canceled for the spring. Janes and the other students were told to try to enroll in online J-Term classes and were informed they would not be offered housing on campus for the month-long winter term. The students also did not enroll in spring term classes during the normal enrollment period — under the assumption they would be in Morocco — limiting their course options for the spring.

"After two years of a pandemic, I thought that Middlebury would plan for the cancellation of one of their programs a bit better, so that it wouldn't leave students both unhoused and unenrolled," Janes said.

Mayers, however, said that there would have been options for the students planning to attend the program in Morocco if they had been unable to switch into the School Abroad in Jordan.

"If the students had not been all would have been able to return to campus for both J-Term and spring," Mayers said.

Janes, along with two other Middlebury students and a student from the University of Pennsylvania, were initially told they could not switch to the School Abroad in Jordan, and that on-campus housing for the spring was not guaranteed. Two days later, however, they were allowed to switch to Jordan after additional host families had been found.

Mayers wrote that initially, host families were hard to find, partially because of Covid-19. Middlebury's Jordanian staff were also busy with final exams and holiday vacations when the closures became a concern for the spring.

"When the official decision was made not to run the program in Morocco this spring, we didn't yet have enough host families in Amman to support the Morocco students, so we expected that these students would return to campus for the spring," Mayers said. "But the staff in Jordan continued their work, and before the end of that week they'd lined up enough homestays for the Morocco students."

Host families are compensated for providing room and board for students. Mayers said that Middlebury staff also visit homes to discuss expectations with host families.

While Janes is excited about the upcoming semester, the switch has come with some challenges, including learning the Jordanian dialect of Arabic. Finding affordable plane tickets to Jordan has also been difficult.

While programs in Morocco and Jordan may be different, both countries offer intense, intriguing student experiences.

"Much of what students gain from studying abroad isn't dependent on where they study abroad," Mayers wrote.

According to Mayers, students learn to be more independent, resourceful and resilient, regardless of study abroad location. He emphasized that speaking in the target language is another key aspect as students become fully immersed.

"Students who spend several months immersed in the language and culture of their host city and country also gain insights into how people in different cultures live, insights that are hard to capture just by reading books, watching films, listening to music, etc," Mayers said.

"I'm very excited for a semester in Jordan, despite the whiplash of all the decisions," Janes said.

The Middlebury School in Jordan begins on Jan. 28. Three of the four Middlebury students who initially planned to study in Morocco will attend, while the fourth has elected to defer their spring semester.

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ANONYMOUS POSTERS IN TOWN BAFFLE RESIDENTS

By JULIA PEPPER
Local Editor

Over the past several months, anonymous poster-sized images have appeared across the town of Middlebury. There are two graphics, one of the character Mia Wallace from "Pulp Fiction" played by Uma Thurman, and one of two hands grabbing a bottle labeled with the number 40; some include the mysterious letters E M S W I D written along the bottom. In addition to Middlebury, the images have been seen in the town of Vergennes, as well as on Route 7 toward Burlington. The Campus has not received reports of any such images having been seen on campus.

In the town of Middlebury, the posters have been spotted on several traffic light control boxes, on the sides of buildings and on dumpsters.

> According to The Addison Independent, public opinion is divided. More definitive, though, is the widespread sense of intrigue among locals.

The arrival of these images has created some questions for town residents: are they artwork, or graffiti? Do they contain a secret message, or is their meaning meant for each interpreter to decide themselves? According to The Addison Independent, public opinion is divided. More definitive, though, is the widespread sense of intrigue among locals.

Many Middlebury residents have questions about the mysterious images that a Reddit thread called "Banksy-esque stickers in Addison County" was created at the end of November to discuss the phenomenon. Residents also asked questions on Front Porch Forum, specifically about the significance of the letters.

No phrase has been found yet that matches the acronym E M S W I D.

Some Reddit users speculated that the images are intended to raise awareness about substance abuse, as the bottle appears to be a 40 oz. bottle of malt liquor, and the image from "Pulp Fiction" depicts a scene in which the character overdoses.

While some people have objected to the works, others are satisfied sitting back and letting the art speak for itself. Some have said that only the artist can say what their work means, but the creator of the images has not been found. According to The Addison Independent, local law enforcement suspects that the artist is part of a local community of graffiti artists, and that these works are related to others that have popped up in the area.

Unsurprisingly, there has been some frustration expressed in the local community, as posting images without permission is technically vandalism. The Addison Independent reported, however, that the stickers are not a top priority for local law enforcement, because they feel there is no indication of hurtful intent.

Residents reportedly first spotted the images in June 2021, after the end of the college's spring term, perhaps making it more unlikely that the creator of the images is a Middlebury student. This is consistent with the fact that no graffiti has been found on Middlebury's campus.

But what do Middlebury students make of the artwork?

Britt Lange '24, who is enrolled in "Studio Art 1: Drawing" this J-Term, said she believes the images are art.

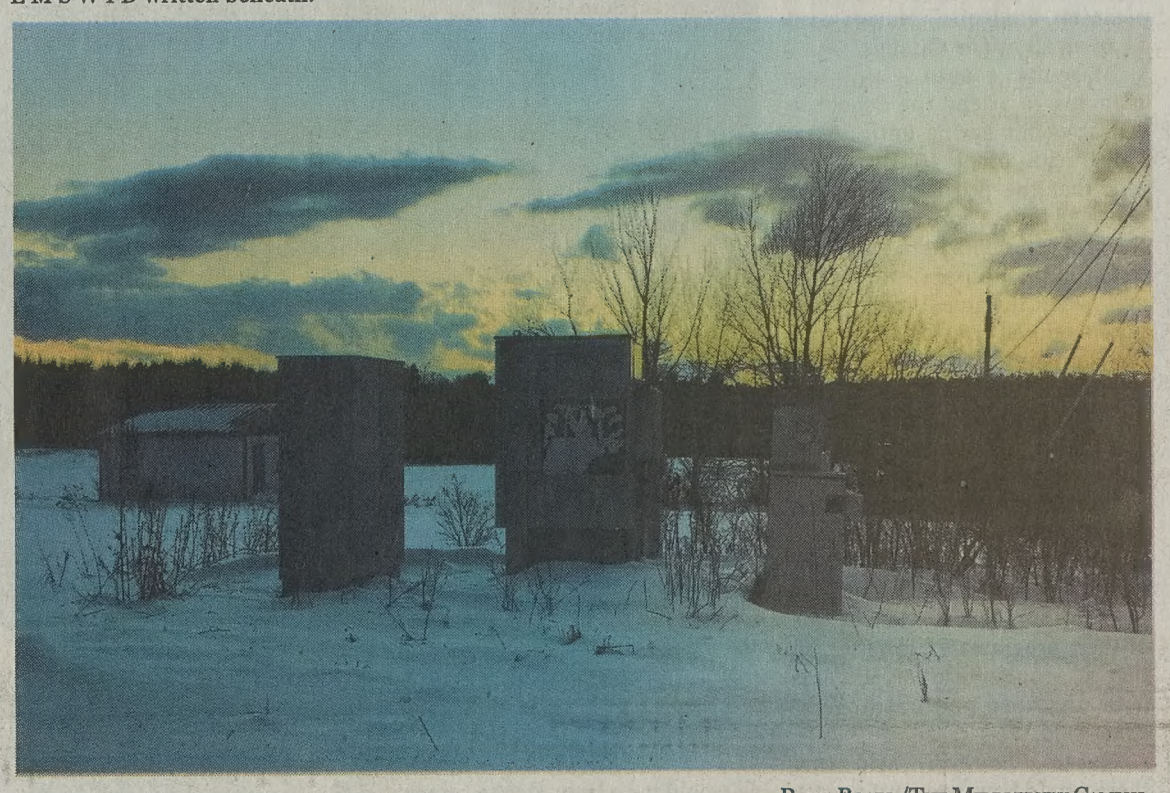
"I definitely think that's art. I guess it depends on what kind of graffiti it is ... But if it means something, if it represents something, it's art. Especially if someone is making the art purposely anonymous, it's meant for interpretation," Lange said.

> "If it means something, if it represents something, it's art. Especially if someone is making the art purposely anonymous, it's meant for interpretation."

Though the artwork's creator and their exact meaning remain unknown, the images have certainly captured the attention of town residents, becoming a topic of intrigue and reflection.

RILEY BOARD/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Art on the side of the street in Middlebury's Court Square potrays Mia Wallace from "Pulp Ficton" with letters E M S W I D written beneath.



RILEY BOARD/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

A damaged poster on a structure at the corner of Route 7 and Beldon Falls Road north of town.

RILEY BOARD/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Examples of the poster with the bottle labeled 40 and pair of hands, on a light traffic control box on North Pleasant Street (left), on a dumpster outside of Kinney Drugs (top right) and on another box on Court Street (bottom right).

Town institutions adjust to Omicron

By BEN WAGNER
Staff Writer

Vermont Covid-19 cases have dramatically climbed as the Omicron wave of the pandemic has surged through both the state and the country. On Jan. 14, Vermont reported 2,137 new cases, more than an 11-fold increase from last January's peak of 205 cases. Though the town of Middlebury does not have an indoor mask mandate, town organizations and the college have made changes to their operating procedures in light of recent case numbers.

The Town Hall Theater instituted a number of new Covid-19 policies this January. These include proof of full vaccination — defined by the theater as two doses and a booster, or two doses if less than six months have passed since the second dose — or a negative PCR test within 72 hours. The theater does not accept negative antigen tests. They also require masks at all times and a valid photo ID for patrons 18 years of age or older.

Executive Director Lisa Mitchell told The Campus that the theater requires photo ID because "requiring ID proof with vaccination status is the most thorough way to verify patrons." Mitchell said that in doing so, the theater was following best practices and guidance from health providers.

> Vermont Covid-19 cases have dramatically climbed as the Omicron wave of the pandemic has surged through both the state and the country.

"Most antigen tests sold in drug stores show a result, but not a time stamp, and are self-administered. The question of how to consistently show proof of a negative antigen result is really the question," Mitchell said.

However, if antigen testing showed more definitive proof of Covid-19 negativity, and local health officials supported it, she said the theater would consider changing its requirements.

Another community institution in Middlebury, The Ilsley Public Library, has also recently begun requiring masks indoors.

"During the time that Delta was spreading (starting in summer 2021) the library was able to keep windows open, ensuring better ventilation." Library Director Dana Hart wrote to The Campus. The timing of the Omicron variant prompted the library to require masks due to the "higher case count, less ventilation, and [a] more contagious strain of the virus," Hart said

Though case counts are significantly higher this winter than last, Hart said that operations were disrupted more last year.

"At that point in time, vaccines were not widely available, and so we closed the building to the public," she said.

Both this winter and last winter, Ilsley has implemented an outdoor pick-up option for library materials. Last winter it was the only way for patrons to borrow materials, while this year it is an option for individuals who do not feel comfortable entering the building.

Since it was last open to live audiences in December, the Town Hall Theater has improved its air quality and filtration systems. Mitchell said they received pandemic relief funding through grants from the Vermont Arts Council and the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, which was used in part to upgrade filtration.

The theater has also hired additional staff to assist the additional prevention measures. These employees will check attendees IDs and vaccination status prior to performances, Mitchell told The Campus. The theater's existing staff was too small to handle the extra tasks, she explained.

> "It's challenging. But we made a choice to operate, rather than shut down indefinitely. We think the arts are important to this community, and we have worked hard to offer a wide range of offerings."

Hart said that Ilsley Library has also experienced some staffing challenges as a result of the Omicron wave.

"If a staff member comes into close contact with someone that tests positive for Covid, they must obtain a negative test before returning to work. Consequently, we have had several staff staying home sick while they wait for test results," she said.

Hart noted that the Omicron wave has not impacted library visitation any more than other phases of the pandemic. Visitation remains steadily about 50% lower than pre-pandemic levels, she said

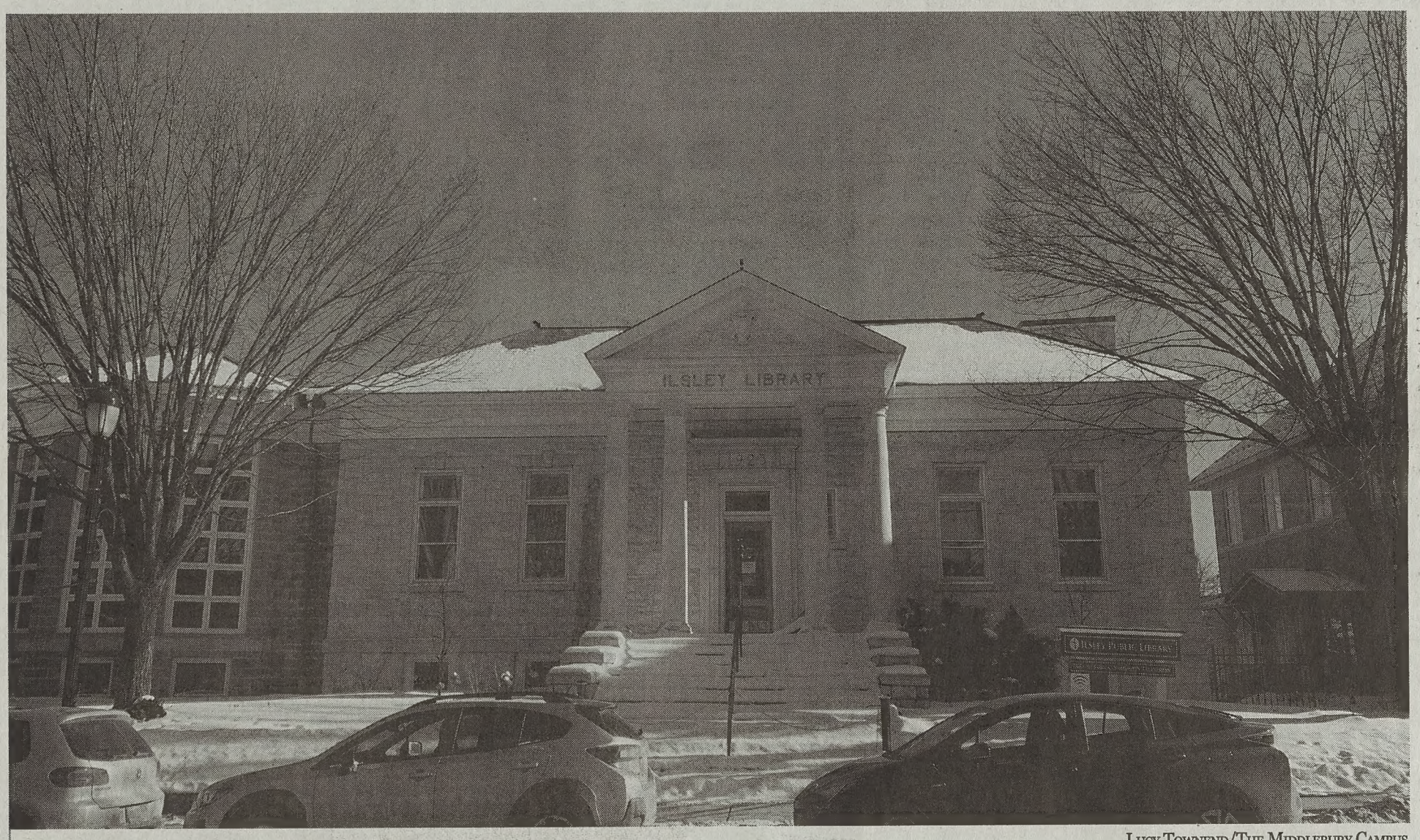
Mitchell said the town theater has also seen fewer visitors due to the pandemic.

"Since reopening, ticket sales have been unsteady," she said. The theater initially closed in spring of 2020 at the start of the pandemic.

"It's challenging. But we made a choice to operate, rather than shut down indefinitely. We think the arts are important to this community, and we have worked hard to offer a wide range of offerings," Mitchell said.

Things appear to be looking up, though, as the J-Term musical "Company" has tickets on sale now. "Tickets are going fast. Not as fast as pre-Covid, but solid numbers for the time," Mitchell added.

This article was originally published online at middleburycampus.com on Jan. 20, 2022.



LUCY TOWNEND/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The Ilsley Public Library recently started requiring mask-wearing inside the building.

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The Middlebury Campus

Notes from the Desk

Sarah Miller '24 is an Opinions Editor for The Campus.

Nuancing Consent

This is how I used to start the story: as soon as I entered his room, I wanted to leave. This is how I should start the story: I was drunk; he was drunk; it's not his fault. It still makes me want to cry. It's not his fault.

One night during my first year at Middlebury, I went up to the room of a guy I knew had been vaguely interested in me for some time, but whom I only considered a friend. That night was the first and only time I initiated flirting with him. He was nice and tall, and I was just drunk enough to convince myself I was attracted to him.

I kissed him or he kissed me, the decision to go up to his room as thoughtless and natural as centripetal force. There must have been some excitement in the journey, but all of my drunken giddiness dissipated with the slam of his door. We had never been alone together in an enclosed space, and his bed seemed to swallow the room.

> We need to start framing these conversations with more nuance, acknowledging the gray areas that are intrinsic to consent, especially on college campuses.

If you asked most people on a college campus, especially this one, if consent can be given when one person is drunk and the other is sober, most people would probably say no — though there remains a gap between rhetoric and practice. The question of consent under the influence becomes more complicated when both parties are drinking — does it become an even playing field? According to the mandatory SafeColleges consent training, the answer is no — the training states that consent cannot be given when either party is under the influence. But lived reality says otherwise. On college campuses, where alcohol is a integral social and sexual lubricant, the premise of abstaining from sex when both parties are drunk for the sake of consent proves idealistic.

I now realize that SafeColleges might have had a point.

In the light of day, I found myself questioning my decision. Why didn't I leave? Initially, I was upset over the act of hooking up with him. But as time progressed, I became more disturbed by my inability to make any indication that I wanted to stop it from happening — not because of any external pressure, but because I felt a sense of duty to keep going.

Why didn't I leave? Friends asked me the same thing. The only explanation I could offer was a thought, which despite the alcohol and months gone by, remains clear: I needed to have sex with him so that I could leave.

I became almost certain I would not have hooked up with him, let alone gone to his room, if I had been sober. My actions seemed, and still seem, alien to me. I recognized the insecurities and impulsivity motivating my decision, but not the girl leaping between momentary desire and action. I thought I was swept up in the night's momentum, but in retrospect, the momentum was primarily alcohol.

As soon as his lips touched mine, I knew it was a mistake. Yet, I continued to sexually engage until he told me he was feeling sick. This came as a welcome excuse to finally leave. By agreeing to go to his room, I felt like I'd made an implicit promise to have sex with him. Voicing my desire to leave seemed unbearably awkward. I worried that if I reneged on the promise in any way, I'd be committing a kind of fraud. To be clear, my feelings of obligation were internally motivated — he was not at all coercive or aware of my discomfort.

Since that spring night, I have been groped non-consensually and followed by men several times, but my encounter with him — or, to be more precise, my response — haunts me the most. I've mostly resigned myself to my inherently limited ability to stop men from enacting violence upon me.

Most women are aware of the statistics: one in five women will be assaulted on a college campus. The real numbers are likely higher because so many incidents go unreported and so many go unrecognized as sexual assault. Considering these statistics, avoiding sexual assualt seems more like a matter of luck than anything else.

> How do we rectify situations in which no one is at fault, but something still went wrong?

However, it seems like, at the very least, I should be able to exercise my ability to refrain from engaging in situations that make me uncomfortable at best and that are dangerous at worst. If I felt like I couldn't leave in a situation like this, what would've happened if someone was being violent?

Conversations about consent often produce a false and heteronormative binary: either he's a rapist or she regrets having bad sex. This binary, as binaries tend to be, is extremely limiting and harmful. It fails to account for how we are all instruments of culture.

For months, I perceived my response as a personal failure of character. I have only recently begun to view the situation with more nuance. Thinking back on that night, it has been sobering to realize just how much consideration of male desire lay at the heart of my actions.

External coercion is often centered in discussions of sexual assualt, but the actions of the other person are only part of the story. Women are also fighting against the cultural forces which still teach them to prioritize other people's needs over their own.

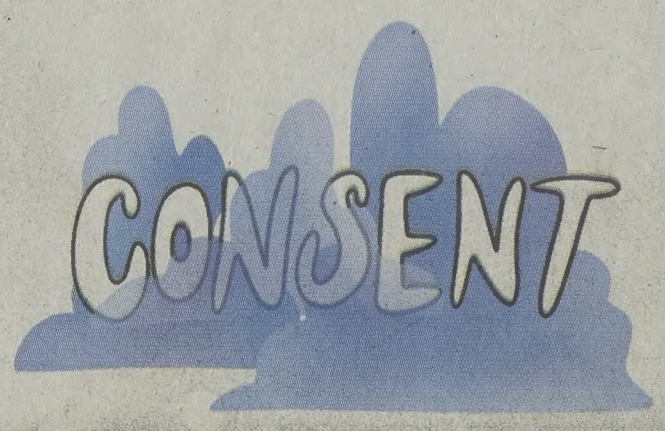
In the past few years, I've witnessed a broad push for affirmative consent and increased consquences for sexual predators. Such progress, though long overdue, is often hailed (or feared) as a cultural reset. The reality, as many of us know, is far more complicated.

As mentioned earlier, sexual assault is still largely framed in heteronormative terms as violence perpetrated against cisgender women by cisgender men — even though transgender people are over four times more likely than cisgender people to experience violent victimization, including rape and sexual assault.

We need to start framing these conversations with more nuance, acknowledging the gray areas that are intrinsic to consent, especially on college campuses.

We can change the legal definitions of acceptable sexual behavior, but how do we change the internal expectations that govern interpersonal dynamics? In addition to the way our legal system often fails survivors, there remains a limit to how much the law can change culture. Formal structures like the courts and Title IX are designed to arbitrate situations in which there is a perpetrator and victim. How do we rectify situations in which no one is at fault, but something still went wrong?

I don't have the answers to any of these questions, but I like to think beginning to wrestle with them might be the only place to start.



PIA CONTRERAS

IN SEARCH OF MIDDLEBURY SWING

I have been researching any and all institutions for recordings that were made by my great-grandfather, Caleb O'Connor — known by the nickname "Kay." He was a guitarist, banjo player, arranger, and even a bandleader in the early 1930s. His final musical arrangement was for Middlebury College, titled "Middlebury Swing."

A native of New Haven, Conn., he got his start at what he described as "connector places" in Connecticut, such as the Ritz Ballroom in Bridgeport and the Roger Sherman Ballroom in New Haven. I'm not exactly sure what the timeline is, but he claimed that he played with Mal Hallet and his orchestra. I have not been able to find his name on any records, or written down elsewhere. Many years later, Caleb would find himself living in Vermont, contemplating what to do with his accumulation of music and ability.

Caleb was also in a banjo duo — called the "Banjo Buddies" with a friend named Bill White, who he first performed with at the University of Alabama in 1930. Both were members of the university Glee Club, which later promoted the duo to travel and give concerts throughout the South. A notable performance was for the Miss America Show of 1933, held at the Poli Palace Theater in Bridgeport, Conn. I have not found anything that may have been recorded by the two while they were on the road.

In 1932 or 1933, Caleb started his own band, which he named after himself: Kay's Commanders. They played at fraternity and sorority gatherings, and the band included some band members that went onto become famous musicians including Buddy Morrow, Al Klink and Jerry Jerome. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate a recording of this band.

By the 1940s, Caleb was working in Hartford, Conn. at either the Hotel Bond or the State Theater, or both. At this time, about 1941, Charlie Barnet came to play at the State Theater, where he met Caleb and asked him to fill in as his guitarist.

Caleb was doing more arranging for bands at this time, and according to a 1943 article, arranged the tune "Dark Forest" for the Buddy James Orchestra. The other song I can name is titled "Each Time I Close My Eyes," which Caleb wrote before departing for the Army in 1943. I have sought out recordings of both these songs, but have not been able to find one.

His musical activities after the war were less frequent, but he was still arranging into the mid-1970s. He made one last arrangement — "Middlebury Swing"— for Middlebury College, before donating his music library, and perhaps records, to them.

I have searched audio archives, from the Library of Congress to Discogs. I have contacted the University of Alabama and now Middlebury College. All of Caleb's music that got donated (and now lost) was valuable to somebody — his great-grandson. Any help finding records is appreciated, and if you have a relative that may have known Caleb, or was in touch with the pre-war jazz scene, I'd love to hear their story.

Caleb Smith can be reached via email at calsmith@hartford.edu.

Letter to the Editor

Caleb Smith is the great-grandson of Caleb O'Connor.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CALEB SMITH

Caleb O'Connor, far-right with baton, as a student at the University of Alabama in 1933.

The Middlebury Romantic

Reflections from abroad: Love near and far

Column

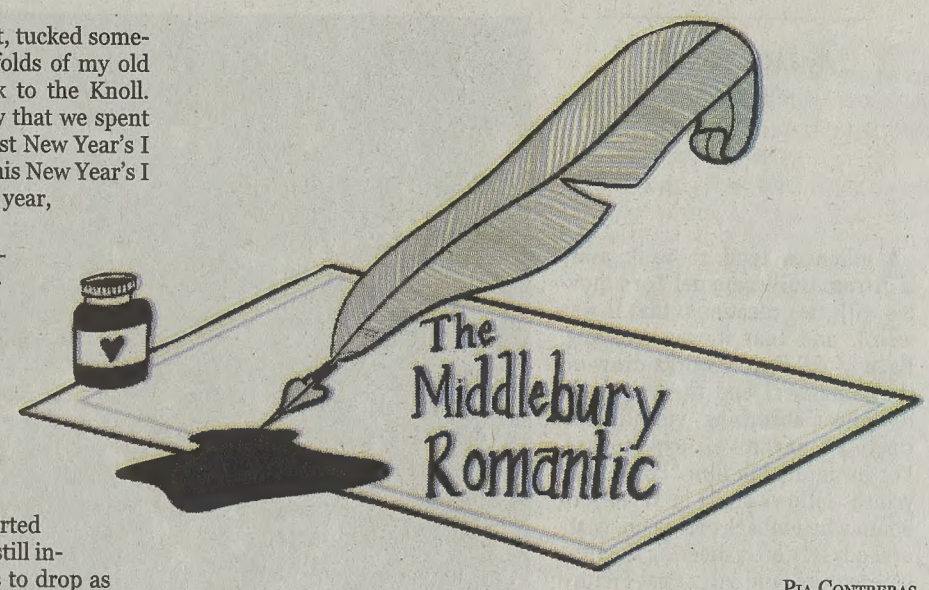
Edyth Moldow '23 is a columnist for The Campus.

Paris. Where do I even begin? It must have started at age 10, when I bookmarked every page of "Secrets of Paris" my mom had found in bargain books at Barnes and Nobles. My fascination was enough to make me quit Spanish, fill my room with French paraphernalia and enroll in every French class I could get my grubby little fingers on. And now, ten years after the root of this obsession with a place I had never even been to, I am finally here.

This "article" must be written like a diary for the sake of telling a story, my story leaving all familiarity and, *tête dans les nuages* (head in the clouds) wandering into a world I was nowhere near prepared for. Where does love come in? Love is written all over this place and this story. It isn't commonly mistaken for the City of Love for nothing (any true Paris geek knows it's the *City of Lights*.)

31/12 I think people know I must not be from here. I look around in awe at everything I see, stopping at the slightest glimpse of art or fashion or flowers being sold on the street. It's New Year's Eve and I should be excited to go to a café and sip wine, watching as people strut by in trench coats, laughing (rirent) at something that was said in rapid French. All I can think about is the New Year's kiss I lost, tucked somewhere between the folds of my old house and that walk to the Knoll. Second year in a row that we spent New Year's apart. Last New Year's I knew I was in love; this New Year's I am still in love. Next year, too.

01/01 I saw everything you're supposed to see today: the Louvre, shining in its grandiosity and stately brow pressed against a true gray Paris sky. The Notre Dame, again supported by metal beams and still inspiring touristic jaws to drop as low as the Seine below. We walked to the Eiffel Tower, and I saw a couple sitting on a park bench. One rested his head on her shoulder, and they sat in silence as the noise and the cigarettes and the illegal wine sellers tried to make their way through the park. A swollen moment of love between strangers in a strange city.



PIA CONTRERAS

PHOTO COURTESY OF EDYTH MOLDOW

03/01 My friend took off yesterday, and I found my way to a new home. On my first floor walk-up, I have a bed, a desk, an armoire, all the things a room should have. I don't know anyone here, and I can't find the words I need to be able to be who I am. Is this what it's like for people who don't speak English as their first language? I can't believe I am all alone. All I want is for my mother to wrap me up in a big blanket, watching as I nurse a cup of warm milk and honey and listen as I tell her what's pressing on my mind. That's a love I take for granted and, being here wishing for her company, I know I never will again.

05/01 I met a friend today, a real Parisienne. She's friendly and made me a salad. She asked all sorts of questions about what life is like at Middlebury and what people our age do in the United States. I asked her about French slang and Parisienne secrets and what it's been like to travel a part of the world I had never seen until just now. While new, love poured from her fingers into the salad she chopped for me and the way her rapid French slowed with annunciation, with welcome.

06/01 I spend a lot of time alone here, I've realized. I walk around my neighborhood, find coffee shops and parks at which to write, deal with technology difficulties, ride the metro, buy groceries, clean my clothes, cry in banks, and do things I never thought I'd have to do until after college. I feel like a real adult. I am overwhelmed. I need to find a way to accept I made a mistake of romanticizing a city that is just a city: too much noise, too many smells, too much rushing and trash and maturing that comes with keeping yourself safe as a woman alone in a city. I love that I am learning how to take care of myself.

07/01 Thoughts of the day: Why are there so many tiny dogs here? I miss my love. How do French women stay so thin? There's so much bread here. I should love myself more. I should love my love more now that we are apart. I should call my parents.

Dear Middlebury students, while you're there, hold your partner a little tighter in the morning. Tell your friends you appreciate that they listen to you, and when you can spend time together. Call your parents to tell them you love them. Eat what makes you happy, because take it from a fake-Parisienne, bread tastes better than "feeling thin" (What was Kate Moss thinking? Choice words omitted for the sake of being in the paper).

...remember that what you already had was a dream itself, and there's nothing more romantic than that.

If you go away to "find yourself" as I have done, remember that you are not defined by the parts of you that are learning how to be an adult, or communicate with others, or missing life as it was before it all became so foreign. Most of all, if you have a Paris, a rêve, a dream that is so romantic that you want nothing else in this world than to obtain it, remember that what you already had was a dream itself, and there's nothing more romantic than that.

Please clean the snow off the top of your car

Notes from the Desk

Catherine McLaughlin '21.5 is a News Editor for The Middlebury Campus.

I know people from New England and other snow-acquainted places can be really condescending when they talk to people who aren't used to dealing with winter weather and storms. As a lifelong New Hampshire resident, I am going to do my best to not do that here. But if this piece does edge on that, please know it's because this is something I really care about.

Please clean the snow off the top of your car. All of it.

In the days following last week's storm, I saw a large number of cars driving around town with a white crew cut of snow on their roofs — and they all seemed to have Midd students behind the wheel. This may not seem like a big deal, but it is. We must do better.

I get it, you may have only one really tiny snow brush and don't want to get your arm all snowy, or maybe you can't even reach the top of your car. But leaving even a small amount of snow on top of your car is incredibly dangerous. It puts both other drivers and you at risk.

In New Hampshire, though not in Vermont, it's actually illegal. Since 2002, Jessica's Law has made it a ticket-able offense to not clean all snow and ice off the top of a vehicle before driving it. The law was enacted because of one day in 1999, when snow and ice flew off a large truck and slammed into another vehicle, which then struck Jessica Smith's car, killing her. She was twenty years old when she died — our age.

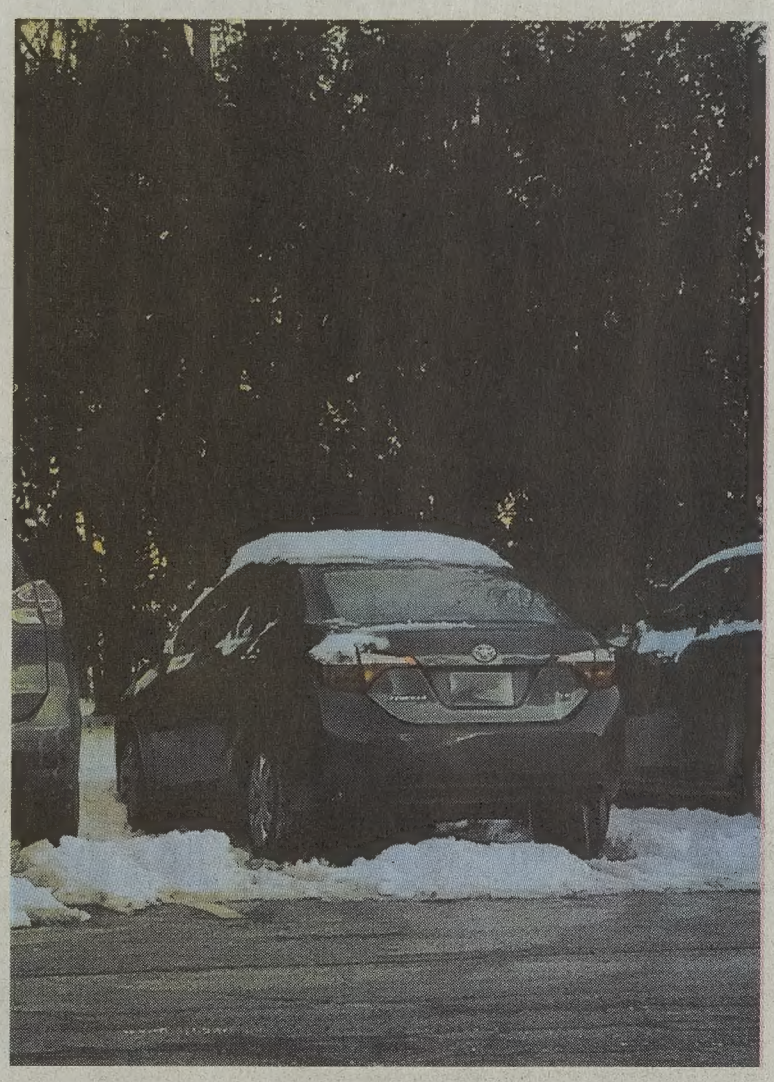


PHOTO COURTESY OF CAT MCLAUGHLIN

"Leaving even a small amount of snow on top of your car is incredibly dangerous," Cat McLaughlin '21.5 writes.

Jessica's Law is not in effect in Vermont, and you will not get a ticket just for having snow atop your vehicle. But that does not mean the circumstances behind the law aren't in effect here. You may think to yourself — especially when the snow is light and fluffy like the storm we just had — "the wind will blow it off when I'm driving." This is sometimes true, but it's an incredibly reckless strategy.

When snow flies off the top of your car, even if it does so very gradually, it compromises the visibility of the cars behind you. They could crash into someone else — or into you — because they can't see properly. It could also cascade down onto your windshield to obstruct your view when you stop suddenly.

Furthermore, when even initially fluffy snow sits on top of your parked car, the sun warms it up and it solidifies. Later, when you're driving, it will then fly off in large sheets and chunks and hit the car behind you. This is at best incredibly jarring and shocking to that driver and could cause them to swerve. At worst it could damage their windshield or even fly through it and hit them. This happens all the time. Google it.

It's happened to me many times: a few days after a storm I'll be driving normally and all of a sudden this huge block of heavy snow slams into my windshield. Because it comes from the car ahead of me and because this usually happens when traveling at higher speeds, there is almost no time to react. I usually slam on the brakes out of instinct. I'm very lucky that I've never been in an accident.

Putting other people in danger because of something so simple is a bad look for you and — since it seems like the majority of people doing this in town are students — it's a bad look for the college. It says that we don't care about the safety of other drivers on the road, pedestrians or ourselves.

And even though you won't get a ticket in Vermont for having debris on top of your car, there can still be major consequences. As Special Operations and Traffic Safety Sgt. Jay Riggen of the Vermont State Police told The Milton Independent earlier this month, if there is an accident or any damage caused by snow off your car hitting or blinding another vehicle, you will likely be charged with Grossly Negligent Operation. That's a felony charge.

Cleaning the snow off your car is no fun and it can be really difficult without the right tools. If you struggle with it, I have some suggestions.

I use a large push broom to clean off my car. It's the most effective thing and it makes it so easy — I can clean a foot of snow off my car in under two minutes. I 10/10 recommend this.

You may not have space in your car to store a push broom. I've also used an old lacrosse or hockey stick, a regular broom or a plastic shovel to reach the top of my car. There are also some foam snow brooms that you can buy for quite cheap at most drugstores, hardware stores or department stores that will work too. If all else fails, open the side door to your car, stand on the seat and use your arm. It's not ideal, but it works.

This is not an exhaustive list: get creative if you have to. Choose whichever method makes the most sense for you. Just make sure you actually do it. As annoying as it is, properly cleaning off your car doesn't take that long, and, to put it bluntly, you look both lazy and inconsiderate when you don't do it.

Reel Critic: "Nightmare Alley"

By JACK TORPEY
Staff Writer

COURTESY PHOTO

Audiences tend to walk away from Guillermo del Toro movies with two reactions: that it was weird, and that it was amazing. Each of del Toro's works draw on the fantastical and the grotesque to deliver absorbing, visually distinctive narrative experiences. For example, his film "Pan's Labyrinth" follows a girl in WWII-era Spain who embarks on a supernatural odyssey after meeting the titular creature, and 2017 Best Picture winner "The Shape of Water" tells the story of a mute woman who falls in love with a humanoid sea monster. "Nightmare Alley," del Toro's latest film, is no different. This noir updates the acclaimed 1947 original by offering a richly textured immersion into the dangerous, and often frightening, world of mentalism.

The film opens with a striking image. A man, whom viewers will come to know as Stanton Carlisle (Bradley Cooper), drags a body into a hole in the floor of a decrepit house. He lights a match, tosses it in the hole and walks out of the house to board a bus. The darkness of this scene looms heavily over the rest of the film. From here, Carlisle stumbles upon a traveling carnival, run by the eccentric Clem Hoatley (Willem Dafoe), where he takes a position as an assistant to Zeena the Seer, a mind reader (Toni Collette). But Carlisle is ambitious — he wants to find the thing that he is "good at," a sense of purpose that has always eluded him. With the help of Zeena's drunken husband Pete (David Strathairn), Carlisle discovers his talent for the practice of mentalism. He learns the trade of reading and manipulating his peers, and before long, he sets off from the carnival with the stage performer Molly Cahill (Rooney Mara) to achieve "the world and everything in it."

Carlisle's journey is one of deteriorating morals and increasing desperation. Something that is never in flux in "Nightmare Alley," however, is del Toro's visual mastery. He demonstrates this skill by matching the film's visual style to the distinct atmosphere of each of its locations. This alignment becomes clear in the film's early scenes at the carnival, a place of excess and gross spectacle and an escape for people to experience the exotic sights and sounds censored by their daily lives. Del Toro expresses the grimy nature of the carnival on-screen through monstrous props and sets, including pickled newborns, hellish fun houses and raving captives forced to eat rabbits for the amusement of the crowd. Provocative on their own, these images are enhanced by eerie, deeply atmospheric lighting that lets the viewer glimpse even the smallest raindrops slipping down the side of a carnival tent.

The plot takes a sharp turn when Carlisle meets the psychiatrist Lilith Ritter, a femme fatale played by a frosty Cate Blanchett. Her entrance into the film also marks a switch in its visual style. Del Toro contrasts the lurid muddle of the carnival with the composed Ritter and her ornate New York office, defined by smooth marble surfaces, plush furniture and cool, teal-tinted lighting. This production design is extremely pleasing to the eye, but the director pushes its function within the film beyond mere aesthetic value. As the imagery transitions from the distasteful yet authentic pomp of the carnival to the calculated veneer of Ritter's office, so too does Carlisle descend deeper into a deadly scheme of fraud and deceit. Del Toro's expression of character through image climaxes during the film's most thrilling sequence, a brutally violent encounter between Carlisle and an affluent client (Richard Jenkins) desperate for the mentalist to apparate his deceased wife. The director stages the action against the backdrop of snow falling softly on a shadowy, labyrinthian courtyard that at once sets the ominous mood of the sequence and manifests Carlisle's conflicting motivations. It is rich, riveting filmmaking.

And yes, the writing is great too. The story ends with a brilliant twist delivered by a perfect final shot. It showcases Cooper at his most unhinged, with a cut to black leaving the image burned in the audience's mind. "Nightmare Alley" is a unique cinematic experience, perfectly suited for theatrical viewing. It is in darkness that del Toro lures his audience into the secrets and horrors of his own creation, showing once again why he is one of the freshest, most exciting directors of the moment.

In defense of a mostly beautiful world

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Editor at Large

"Beautiful world, where are you?" is the title of Sally Rooney's third novel and the question that the protagonists ask as they re-evaluate themselves and their place in an increasingly troubled society. "Beautiful World, Where Are You" follows Alice, a successful but unstable novelist who has recently moved to the Irish coast, and her college best friend Eileen, who works a low-paying job at a literary magazine in Dublin. Throughout the novel, we see Eileen reconnect with a childhood friend, Simon, and Alice begin dating Felix, who works at a nearby warehouse.

Like her previous novels, "Conversations with Friends" and best-seller "Normal People," "Beautiful World, Where Are You" is mainly character-driven. The book bumps along with no clear plot arc as the protagonists balance love, career, friendships and personal ambitions. However, in a stylistic departure from her previous work, Rooney gets more creative with the book's structure. Alice and Eileen are separated for the majority of the novel, and the chapters alternate between recounting Alice and Eileen's separate lives. However, the chapters are also punctuated by emails the friends exchange. In these emails, Alice and Eileen maintain their friendship while discussing weightier topics, including politics, climate change, art, history and philosophy.

As in her earlier works, Rooney excels at capturing everyday interactions and deep emotions between people. Details like the glassiness of Alice's eyes or how Eileen gestures with her hands while speaking stand out to the reader. Her protagonists and their love interests are strikingly realistic characters who can be messy, unlikeable and sometimes downright annoying (*cough cough* Felix). Like in "Normal People," they are vexed by their relationships and have trouble communicating with each other. They also struggle with figuring out what they want from others and how to articulate those needs. If anything, these characters feel too real sometimes. It can be frustrating to see those complicated dynamics unfold on the page.

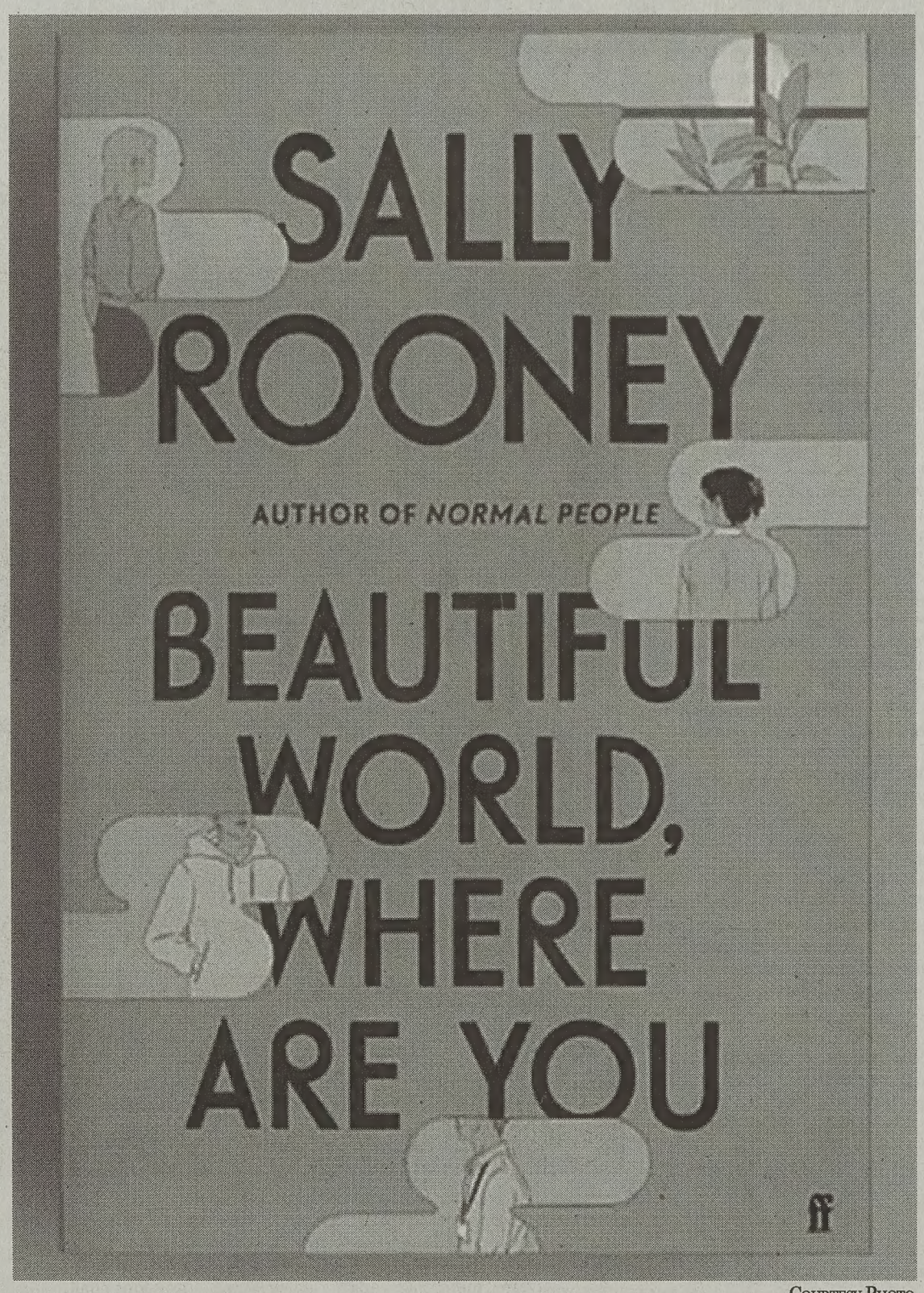
Rooney's prose is equally stirring. She describes moments like a touch on the wrist and spaces like empty rooms so eloquently and beautifully. As readers, we are mere observers of the characters and are kept at a curious distance; Rooney doesn't reveal their inner monologue. She also often opens or closes chapters with simple but lovely images of fading afternoon light or receding ocean tides.

However, Rooney falters with a few elements of the book. I don't think she completely balances Alice and Eileen's sections gracefully enough. Sometimes the braided narratives felt off-kilter. It's difficult to give equal weight to both Alice and Eileen's lives, and I wish that they reunited earlier in the novel. I found the book most enjoyable when all four main characters were together and could play off each other, creating moments of tension and joy.

Although the inclusion of the emails is a creative element, their content often feels very stiff and pretentious. When Alice and Eileen go into long monologues recounting historical events, my eyes tended to glaze over a bit. I found myself counting the number of pages until the next chapter and its return to the heart of the story. It's clear that Rooney was trying to make a cultural critique, but I wish she did it more subtly.

The book concludes with the overarching message that despite the troubles that plague contemporary society, Alice and Eileen can find joy in their lives. They can learn to appreciate the pleasure of writing novels or the beauty of a golden afternoon. Alice and Eileen are comforted by their love for each other and their partners, with the knowledge that all around them, people are continuing to fall in love, create art and start their own families.

"Beautiful World, Where Are You" is an ambitious novel, as it combines scenes of friendship, romance and intimacy with a sharp cultural commentary. I was not the biggest fan of "Normal People" and went into "Beautiful World, Where Are You" a Sally Rooney skeptic. Although "Beautiful World" is not without its faults, I was left with an appreciation for Rooney's gorgeous prose and took comfort in a story of real people trying to find love and connection in challenging times.



COURTESY PHOTO

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"FRIENDS" ON STAGE COMBINES HUMOR, '90S NOSTALGIA AND 2022 PANDEMIC ANGST

By EMILY HOGAN
Layout Editor

The beloved '90s sitcom "Friends" came to the stage at Middlebury this winter. On Jan. 21, Middlebury theatre students put on a reimagined portrayal of the beloved show, performing two 20-minute episodes: "The One Where No One's Ready" and "The One With the Pandemic." The latter was an original episode written by Kayla Schwartz '23.5.

The student-written episode, as well as the episode from the show, were both bottle episodes, or, "an episode in a season of TV where they have a whole episode happen in one location, usually the main location of the show," director Bella Costantino Carrigan '22 explained. Often, bottle episodes are created for budgetary purposes, and usually only involve the main cast members of the show.

The idea for a "Friends" reenactment came when Schwartz approached Costantino-Carrigan to write a spec script, a script written for an episode of a show that already exists, like "Friends."

"She was like, 'that's insane, let's do it,'" Schwartz recalls. The two got to work casting parts and writing the new episode, initially intending the performance to be a full-scale production, with the classic "Friends" couch and other set elements, as well as costumes. However, they were met with some challenges after students got back from winter break.

"The first week was the week we got back and we just weren't sure what was going on with Covid and what could be in person, so we essentially didn't have a week to rehearse," Schwartz said. Schwartz and Costantio-Carrigan decided to scale back their production.

The actual production involved lights and pre-recorded sounds like phone calls and music to tie the episode together, as if it were actually happening on television.

The episodes ran one after another, each featuring their own six-member cast. During the theme song breaks, all cast members got to their feet to dance to the nostalgic beat of the show's iconic theme song "I'll Be There for You," by The Rembrandts, bringing more life to the already vibrant and humorous elements of the show.

The first episode, Schwartz's "The One With the Pandemic," involved a humorous modern interpretation of current events. The characters grappled with the stress of the pandemic and made light of the bizarre events that have occurred between 2020 and 2021.

"The past couple semesters have been really hard on everyone and I think our community needs a little bit of a laugh," Schwartz said of their decision to write the episode.

"The One Where No One's Ready" evoked a humored and nostalgic response as the cast brought to life the ever-lovable, and sometimes exasperating, characters, and world of "Friends," reminiscent of more carefree times.

Costantino-Carrigan and Schwartz also aimed for their cast list to reflect a variety of different experience levels. "We have a cast of twelve ... they range from freshmen to super senior Febs and from experience of 'this is my first time on stage at Middlebury' to veterans of the department and full theatre majors," Costantino-Carrigan said.

With minimal time-commitment involved, the production gave students an opportunity to participate in a fun and unique show in addition to other J-Term activities.

The cast had two rehearsals and a read-through before taking the stage before an audience.

"During the rehearsals we read through the script standing on the stage ... mostly just feeling out how we felt about the character, making our own judgments," Maggie Blake '24, who played Ross in "The One with the Pandemic," said. This creative freedom allowed the cast, as well as Costantino-Carrigan and Schwartz, to delve deeper into new areas of theatre without fear of imperfections.

"You could put your all into it in a different way ... you could kind of have fun interacting with people and making theater in a more casual and just nonchalant kind of way," Blake said of the experience.

J-Term often offers students who are interested in theatre more space to explore what they are interested in while also providing theatre students with the opportunity to gain experience in a fun community environment.

"I am interested in directing but it's definitely not my first priority in the theatre world. I'm more of an actor and a designer so it's more of an exploratory thing for me," Costantino-Carrigan said. The experimental nature of the process allowed the cast to bring to life the much-loved characters of "Friends," while drawing out laughter and happiness from the audience.

"We can get together and do something fun and have a good time doing it and have people have a good time watching it. You know, that's the goal," Schwartz said.

COURTESY PHOTO

The performance included two 20-minute episodes, "The One Where No One's Ready" and an oiginal episode called "The One with the Pandemic."

Spin Doctor: Dope Game Stupid

By YARDENA CARMI
Columnist

COURTESY PHOTO

Released in March 2021, "Dope Game Stupid" is the debut album from enigmatic rapper Bruiser Wolf. Wolf is a member of Bruiser Brigade, a new rap collective and independent record label based in Detroit and named after an easter egg from an old X-Men video game.

Like a video game, the narrative of "Dope Game Stupid" is fast-paced and hyperreal, with Wolf at the center of its hero's journey as he describes the moral dilemma of finding himself reliant on drug-dealing to support his family. The overall message of "Dope Game Stupid" is one of optimism, but the album gives unflinching detail in describing the harsh realities that can undercut life-long dreams, even when they are achieved. The production is crisp but warm, full of dreamy retro samples and crackling static. At the same time, industrial drones and synthesizers lend the album's sound a queasy edge as the songs stumble into each other like a drunk walk home.

"Thank God" is a jubilant opener, with Wolf crowing about what he has overcome and taunting those who doubted him. It's a great peek at what he has to offer over the rest of the album. From the start, one of the record's greatest strengths is the rapper's distinctive voice — he proclaims on "I'm A Instrument," another song on the album, "Nobody sound like this/ I got my own sound, I'm a instrument." Wolf's vocals are at times coarse, crooning, dryly humorous or heavy with emotion. The other quality that makes "Dope Game Stupid" so compelling is his ability to land a joke. Transitioning effortlessly between growls and yelps, Wolf delivers punchline after punchline. His raps are packed with double entendres and puns — my favorite of his one-liners (that can be in print) is "I'm doing well/ like Shamu." Although by the end of the album the imagery can feel repetitive, Wolf employs an ever-changing set of analogies, drawing on a dictionary's worth of synonyms for cocaine. His array of metaphors and pop culture references is dizzying, sometimes only revealing themselves on the second or third listen.

"Use Me (I'm Dope)" is a prime example of Wolf's multi-layered approach. While the refrain, "I'm dope/ And I know you just wanna use me (I'm used up)/The one that they love...I'm drugs," at first comes across as self-aggrandizement, it also references Wolf's role as a dealer and the loss of agency he felt as he got caught up in the drug game. He continues to dismantle rap tropes about the glamor of dealing on the album's centerpiece "Dope Game $tupid." Wolf's rapid flow over a jazzy guitar riff is irresistible, even as he delivers one of the album's most cynical, world-weary statements: "The dope game stupid, but the boy still do it."

Wolf usually follows moments of darkness with levity, like when he closes out cinematic fifth track "Whip Test" with the zinger "I should start a 'keep it real' challenge on TikTok." "Middle Men," while referencing details of the drug trade in vivid specificity, also pays homage to Wolf's influences by interpolat-ing 50 Cent. Although he neverstops cracking jokes, all bravado falls away on "Momma was a Dopefiend." The album's closer and most vulnerable territory, Wolf lays out how his mother's drug addiction affected him emotionally from a young age, and eventually drove him to dealing in order to support her. The track grapples with his complicity in the social issues that harmed him and his family and the cyclical nature of trauma.

Bruiser Wolf's account of his path from drug dealer to label rapper drips with dark humor and irony without shying away from emotional depth. At just under forty minutes, "Dope Game Stupid" is dense and oversaturated, with recurring themes, imagery and instrumental motifs that help tie the album into a satisfying whole. The story Wolf crafts by drawing on his lived experience and gift as a rapper is equal parts triumphant and cautionary.

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WOMEN'S ULTIMATE FRISBEE TEAM WINS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP, MEN'S SQUAD PLACES SECOND

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Sports Editor

After a two-and-a-half year hiatus from competition, the Middlebury Pranksters returned to the national stage in Norco, Calif., where the women's team claimed their first ever national title while the men finished as runners-up.

The women's team entered the tournament listed as the No. 4 seed in the division, but they made light work of the pool play, finishing 3–0 after wins over Occidental College, Wheaton College, and Lehigh University. For their efforts, the Pranksters earned a first round bye — meaning they automatically advanced to round two — in the playoffs, setting themselves up for a match against No. 6 Union.

Despite Union's impressive start to the tournament, the Pranksters dispatched them in tidy fashion, winning 15–5. In the semi-final, the Panthers were pitted against the top-seeded Truman State. Despite a strong start by Truman, the Pranksters outlasted their opponent to book their spot in the national championship game. On Dec. 20, at approximately 2 p.m. PST, the Middlebury Pranksters were crowned national champions for the first time in team history, defeating Portland 15–10.

Captain Claire Babbott-Bryan '23 said the victory was far from certain at the onset of the tournament.

"We hadn't had many chances to play at a high collegiate level," Babbott-Bryan said. "Sectionals weren't particularly competitive, so we didn't know how we compared to the highest level teams."

One of the main elements of the Prankster's success was their team depth, with myriad players scoring points for the team. "We had such a deep team," Babbott-Bryan explained. "We could put any seven [players] out there and feel confident that they could compete at a really high level."

Babbott-Bryan also highlighted the key contributions of super senior Febs Jenny Pushner '21.5, Sidra Pearson '21.5 and Josie Bourne '21.5, saying that the three provided the necessary leadership and guidance to help their younger players perform at the highest level.

The men's team was unable to defend their national title from 2019, but they went down with a fight as they finished national runner-up. The team entered the tournament ranked No. 3 in the division, a status they cemented with three comfortable wins in pool play. The Pranksters went on to defeat Carlton — a team with a rich frisbee history — in the quarterfinal, setting up a match against the No. 2 St. Olaf. After a back and forth game, George Drumheller '22.5 scored a decisive game-winning point to clinch a spot in the championship game.

The Pranksters gave a spirited display in the final but ultimately came up short in a 15–12 loss to the breakout Oklahoma Christian team, failing to overturn the three-point deficit they gave up in the second half. The loss may have been a disappointment for the Pranksters, but it allayed any doubts that the Pranksters may have lost a step during the pandemic.

"This was the first time that three of our grades have played at a national collegiate level," said senior captain Walker Frankerberg '22. "Only our seniors had been here before, but everyone really bought in and was focused on the team."

In addition to the impressive team results, the Pranksters won numerous individual accolades. Babbott-Bryan won best all-around player in the division, Kamryn You Mak '23 won defensive player of the year and was a runner up for rookie of the year, and Keziah Wilde '24 was a runner-up for offensive player of the year. On the men's side, Frankenberg was a runner-up for all-around player of the year and won offensive player of the year. Leo Sovell-Fernandez '22 won defensive player of the year, with Max Hanscom '23 right behind him as a runner up and winner of the breakout player of the year award.

"It feels amazing to win player of the year," Babbott-Bryan said. "I've put in a lot of work, so it's nice to get recognition. I wouldn't have been able to play or compete at the level I did without my super strong team. This award really feels like a team win."

Frankenberg echoed this sentiment. "It sounds cliché but without the team I just couldn't have done it," he said. "Frisbee is not an individual sport."

The Pranksters are currently in their offseason, but they will return to action in March for the spring season. Both teams are hungry to repeat their successes from the fall season, which was a makeup season as a result of the pandemic and thus gave the chance for previously eligible graduates to return to the collegiate level.

"We didn't bring back any graduates so we're keeping the same roster for spring, which not many teams can say," Frankenberg explained. "Everybody is really hungry to get back to work in the spring."

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PHOTO COURTESY OF RODNEY CHEN

Kamryn You Mak '23 stretches for a catch during a win over Truman State in the national tournament.

KOBY ALTMAN '04 EARNS CONTRACT EXTENSION WITH THE CAVALIERS

PHOTO COURTESY OF TODD BALFOUR

Koby Altman '04 recently received a contract extension and promotion with the Cleveland Cavaliers

By JOSH ROSENSTEIN
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, Jan. 12, Cleveland Cavaliers general manager Koby Altman '04 landed a contract extension with the team. He was also promoted to president of basketball operations.

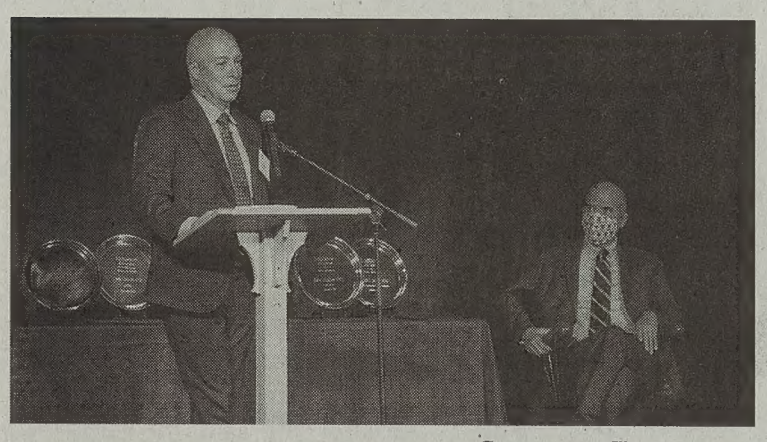
Altman was hired as general manager in 2017 and has led the team through several ups and downs. The Cavaliers reached the NBA Finals in 2018 before plummeting to one of the worst records in the NBA last season (22–50). But things are looking up this season, with the Cavaliers in sixth place in the Eastern Conference (27–19).

Altman was a three-year starter on the men's basketball team at Middlebury. Head Coach Jeff Brown had nothing but praise for his former player.

"It's really impressive what he's done at a relatively young age in the sport of basketball," Brown said. "It speaks volumes about the type of person he is and the type of leadership skills that he possesses."

Altman looks to build on his success this year with the Cavs and navigate the team to its first playoff appearance since 2018.

Kent Hughes '92, former Middlebury hockey star, named general manager of Montreal Canadiens



COURTESY OF TODD BALFOUR

Kent Hughes '92 is Middlebury hockey's all-time leader in assists (140) and points (194) in a career. Last fall, he was inducted into the Athletics Hall of Fame.

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Sports Editor

Kent Hughes '92 is Middlebury hockey's all-time leader in assists (140) and points (194) in a career. Last fall, he was inducted into the Athletics Hall of Fame.

After spending over 25 years as a National Hockey League agent, Kent Hughes '92 was named general manager of the Montreal Canadiens on Jan. 18. Hughes takes charge of a struggling franchise that currently sits eighth in the Atlantic Division.

Hughes led Middlebury to a national championship in 1991 as a junior before captaining the team his senior year. Over the course of his final three seasons, the Panthers were 65–13–2. Hughes remains the top assist provider (140) and top points scorer (194) in program history, while also setting the single-season record in both categories in 1992. He was inducted into the Athletics Hall of Fame in November 2020.

Hughes' former coach, Bill Beaney, who now coaches the men's golf team at Middlebury, was full of praise for his former player.

"If you spend long enough coaching you might be fortunate and lucky to have a player like Kent," Beaney said in a news release. Beaney went on to describe Hughes as a "literal game changer, a transformative influence."

Hughes now faces the steep task of turning things around for the Canadiens, who return to action against the Anaheim Ducks at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 27.

Seven Questions with Xander Swann '25, men's track and field

COURTESY PHOTO

Xander Swann '25 takes off in a race at Pace Academy in Atlanta, Georgia.

By OWEN PARK
Staff Writer

Xander Swann '25, from Atlanta, Ga., is running in his first season on the men's track and field team. In this installment of "Seven Questions," Swann discusses his introduction to hurdling, his journey to collegiate track and his favorite meal at Middlebury.

Owen Park: Growing up, was track your main sport?

Xander Swann: Not initially. The first sport I seriously played was soccer. I remember playing defense and always being one of the faster kids on the field. Technically, I wasn't super skilled — my play style was mostly me running up to the ball and kicking it as hard as I could. I dropped soccer in fifth grade and started to run track and cross country in middle school.

OP: What made you decide to run hurdles?

XS: Nothing in particular. I tried a lot of different events before I settled on hurdles. During track meets, I was always really impressed when watching hurdlers — the whole event was really entertaining to watch. I always knew that I was better at jumping than a lot of other kids on the team. One of the first events I consistently did was the long jump. I also was better at sprinting than I was at cross country, which definitely pushed me to commit to a shorter event.

OP: Were you always aiming to run track in college?

XS: It wasn't really a serious thought until sophomore year. I have to give credit to Justice, a senior on my school's track team, for seriously making me consider competing at the collegiate level. She was an unofficial leader on the team and ended up committing to a D-I program, which got me to start thinking about the possibility of running in college. I wasn't performing that well during my freshman year, so I worked really hard between seasons to put myself in a better position to be recruited. I kept this up through the end of my high school career — now I'm here.

OP: Do you have any pre-meet rituals?

XS: I like to keep everything pretty simple, just to cover all of the essentials. The night before a meet, I make sure to get a good night's sleep, eat whole foods and stay hydrated. Before the meet I'll walk through a stretching routine with the team as well as one on my own that I've done since high school. I like to do dynamic [stretches] and striders to physically warm up as well.

OP: What's your favorite part of being on the track team?

XS: The community. A few days ago, one of my teammates asked me out of the blue if I wanted to go ice fishing and we ended up going a day or so afterwards. I find that a lot of people are really open to hanging out with you and everyone else just to have a good time. It feels really great to be surrounded by a group of guys you're really close with.

OP: What are some of your favorite or least favorite drills to do?

XS: I'd have to say 400-meter repeats — those are really brutal. We have to complete a lap around the track as fast as we can with only a few seconds of rest in between reps, and it's super tiring. One of the few times I did this workout was during parents weekend. I didn't know it at the time, but my brothers were watching me run them. In high school, we did 200-meter repeats on a gravel track at a local park during preseason. Both drills are meant to build your endurance, get your muscles used to not having a lot of oxygen and being able to operate at a high level in that state. They're really helpful, but are still a pain to do.

OP: What's your favorite meal from Proctor?

XS: Hands down, the black pepper tofu with rice. The sauce for the tofu is absolutely stellar, and I'll usually get it over any meat that they're serving. It's the one dish that I know I can always count on to be amazing whenever it's served.

Ali Nullmeyer '23 pushes for Olympic roster spot with fifth-place finish in alpine ski World Cup

COURTESY PHOTO

Nullmeyer dodges past a pole in a World Cup slalom race in Levi, Finland.

By BECCA CLARK
Contributing Writer

At the start of the winter, Ali Nullmeyer '23 said she wanted to become a consistent competitor against the best skiers in the world. Her recent results have proved that she is.

Nullmeyer had a career-best finish of fifth place in the World Cup slalom in Zagreb, Croatia, on Jan. 4. After finishing the first run of the race in 17th, Ali won the second run, beating favorites like Mikaela Shiffrin and Petra Vhlova. Her second run catapulted her to fifth overall, just 0.47 seconds off the podium.

In her next race just a few days later at Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, Ali proved that her recent result was no fluke, finishing sixth overall.
Ali came even closer to the podium on Jan. 11 in Schladming, Austria. She finished the first run in third, just 0.35 seconds off the fastest time. Unfortunately, Ali didn't finish the second run of the challenging course, but walked away with some added confidence from her first run time.

"I'm really happy with my last few races," Nullmeyer said. "I feel my skiing is in a really good place and I'm feeling confident moving into the next block of racing."

Ali has been competing at the World Cup level for the past three seasons, and has steadily made her way up the rankings. With her recent results, Ali's world ranking has improved to 13th for slalom.

Nullmeyer has balanced both World Cup and NCAA races while also shouldering the duties of a full-time student. Unlike many of her competitors, Nullmeyer isn't focused solely on the World Cup.

"I think racing the World Cup as a college student is really fulfilling," Nullmeyer said.

Among the few other women on the World Cup tour that also attend college, Nullmeyer said a sort of camaraderie has developed. "I feel like we kind of help each other get through it," Nullmeyer said. "It's nice to just have people there who kind of understand what you're trying to do."

Nullmeyer enrolled at Middlebury in the fall of 2019 after taking three gap years to focus on skiing. When the collegiate season last winter was canceled because of Covid-19 concerns, Nullmeyer took advantage of the option to take classes remotely at Middlebury and spent the majority of the season racing in Europe.

Nullmeyer says she is excited to return to training with the Middlebury team, which she will do in the coming days. Despite missing the first college race of the season at Colby this past weekend due to the World Cup schedule, Nullmeyer returns to Vermont for the next two weeks and is hoping to race in the next Collegiate Carnival race at St. Michael's College.

After that, Nullmeyer has her sights set on the Olympics in February. Her recent results have likely secured her a spot there, with the official roster set to be announced in the coming days.

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THE YELLOW DELI: RUTLAND'S CONNECTION TO A GLOBAL RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

By ATTICUS COATES
Photojournalist

From the outside, the Yellow Deli doesn't seem so controversial. It's nestled between shops on a busy street in the heart of Rutland. Large yellow signs advertise its hostel for Appalachian Trail hikers and its policy of being open 24 hours a day, four days a week. Surrounding the restaurant are bookstores, a theater, and an alley where local musicians play live music.

The vibrant energy continues into the deli. A bustle not often seen in sleepy Vermont is contained within the muraled walls. Patrons come in and out at all times, day or night. Everything about the interior design is unique. Roofs (made from reclaimed barns) cover booths, the specials menu is hand-drawn and the ornate wood tiled ceilings are original to when the building was built in the early 20th century. The lights bathe everyone in a warm orange-red glow, and every inch of wall is covered with art.

Catchy yellow paint announces a "Market and Lounge" past a corridor. Walking through leads to a shop selling yerba maté, handmade soap and body care products. While it may seem like a typical, if off-beat, restaurant, the Yellow Deli is actually part of an alternative religious community that spans the globe.

The community, called the Twelve Tribes, was founded in the 70s during the Jesus movement and after the end of the hippie movement. They came together around the idea of collective living outside mainstream society in order to better practice their religious beliefs.

According to their website, there are 15 Yellow Delis across the US, a handful in Canada, and one in Japan, England, Argentina and Australia each. They have communities in Brazil that farm the leaves to make their yerba maté. Another group of theirs has a farm in Vermont, making their soaps and body washes.

Steven and Barkai are the two managers of the deli. Between them, Steven has been there the longest. He joined the Rutland community and the Yellow Deli in 1996. Feeling the need for a spiritual connection in his life, Barkai found the North Carolina community working at an organic farm and joined them in 2009 before relocating up to Vermont.

Everyone in the Rutland section of the group works at the deli in some fashion. Steven and Barkai explained that the community members provide all the services for the restaurant, including the electrical work, carpentry, and mural paintings. They explained that every member partially owns the deli — they're all "shareholders". "We're like a family," Steven said.

While they don't impose their beliefs on visitors , they are eager to share their way of life when asked. The group believes that living together and forming their own rules and laws is the only way to achieve their spiritual and religious goals. "There were the Separatists and the Puritans," Barkai said, identifying with the religious groups' urge to ideologically separate themselves from the outside world. They do not believe that their preferred way of life is fully compatible with modern society.

Mittens handmade by the community.

The original deli in North Carolina started their 24-hour service after, they say, they received a sign from an angel telling them to do so. This tradition has continued to all the current Yellow Delis, though hours may have been impacted by the pandemic. "We get a lot of firemen and police officers during late night hours," Barkai said, explaining that the deli has become popular with the emergency services.

The Yellow Deli works to their goal of serving the community through simplicity. In 2008 the group remodeled the restaurant, going back to an original, simpler feel, opting for an open design so that everyone can see inside.

While this openness contributes to them being a staple of their community, the reception of the Twelve Tribes is not uniformly positive. Journalists have produced documentaries, articles and books about the community — racial justice organizations have investigated the Twelve Tribes, as have the FBI.

In late 2021, Middlebury alumni released a YouTube series titled "The Deli People." The show satirizes the deli and its community members by portraying them as white-robed cult members obsessed with sin. When asked about it, the managers grimaced. "'The Deli People' filmmakers obviously have never seen our community," sighed Barkai.

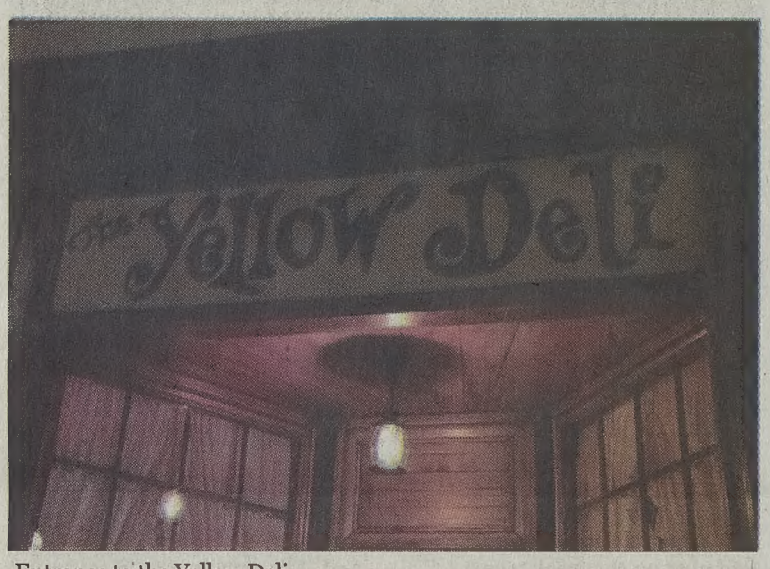
When asked to comment on the Yellow Deli and their show, the creators of "The Deli People" released this message:

"We have recently received word that some members of The Twelve Tribes have seen The Deli People and are disappointed with what they believe to be an inaccurate portrait of their beliefs. For this reason, we would like to apologize and offer a brief word of clarification:

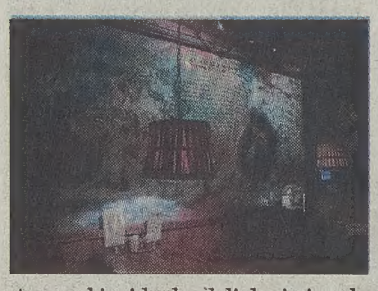
Though we strongly condemn some of the beliefs and alleged actions of members of The Twelve Tribes, our series was never meant to serve as an accurate reflection of those beliefs or actions. We encourage all who are interested in the group to conduct independent research on the matter."

Teasing a group about their collective living and separation from society is one thing, but it misses a deeper issue about the Twelve Tribes and their communities. They have a worrying view on homosexuality. "We do not approve of homosexual behavior. We do not regard it as a genetic variation, a valid alternative lifestyle, or a mere psychological quirk. We embrace what God says on this subject without regard for political correctness. Homosexual behavior is immoral and can be mortally dangerous," their website says in a FAQ section. These beliefs are hard to reconcile with their welcoming demeanor in person at the deli.

In spite of the views the Twelve Tribes has, the constant flux of customers shows that the restaurant is an undeniable staple of Rutland. Walking around the restaurant and its little businesses, there are waiters or patrons at every corner. Locals flow in and out. Rutland gathers here to eat, to socialize, and to shop. The Yellow Deli does not seem to be going anywhere soon.

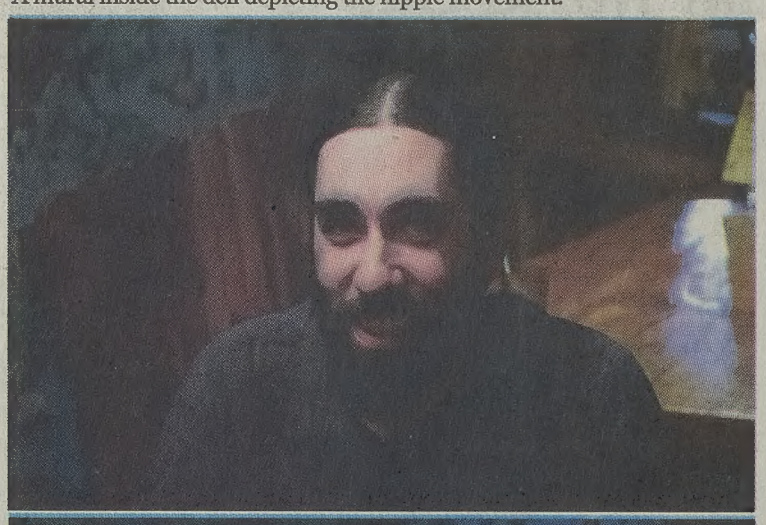
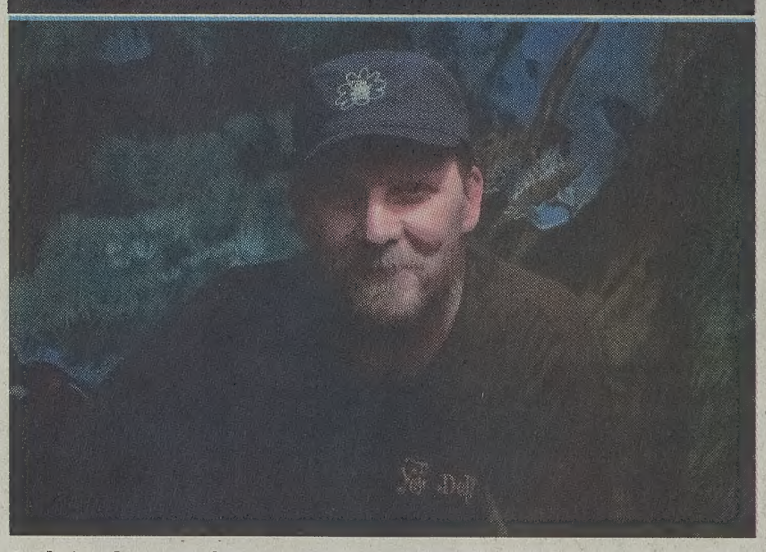


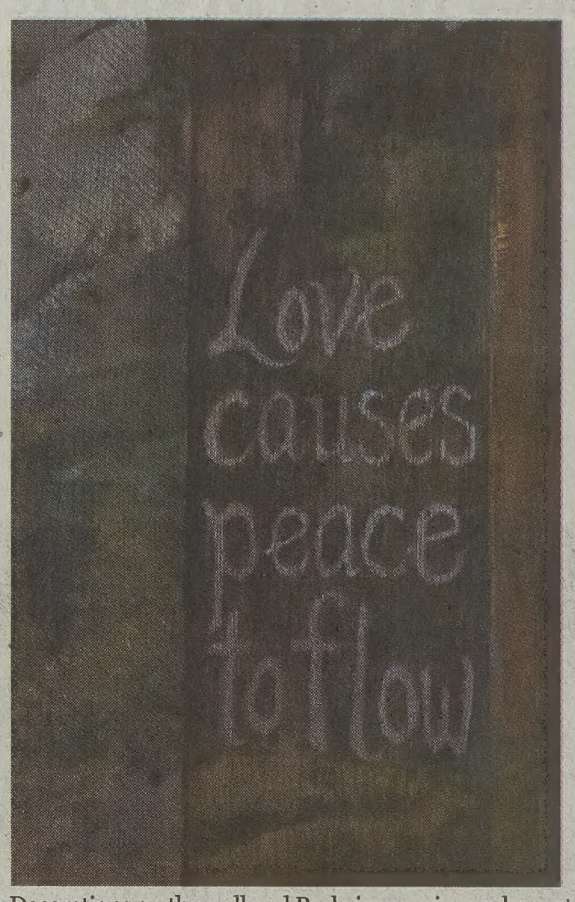
Entrance to the Yellow Deli.

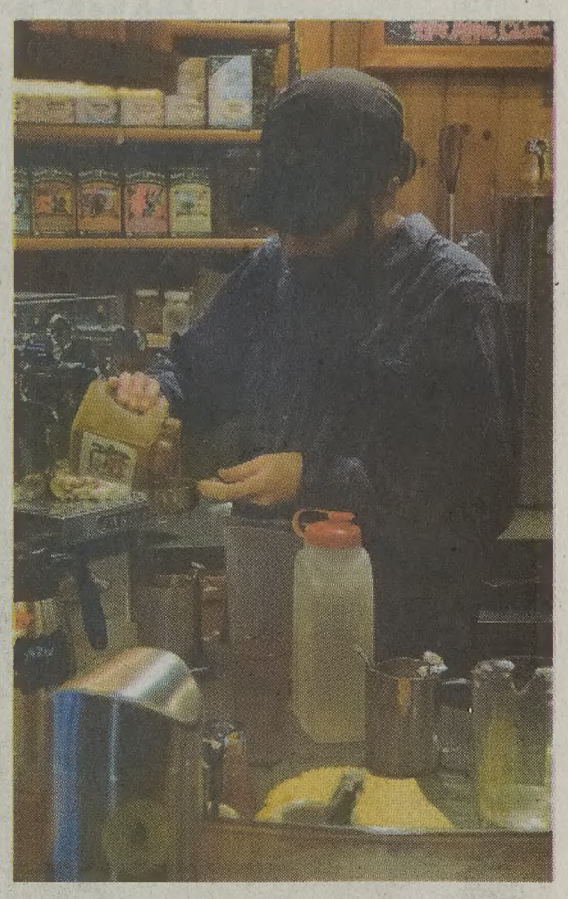


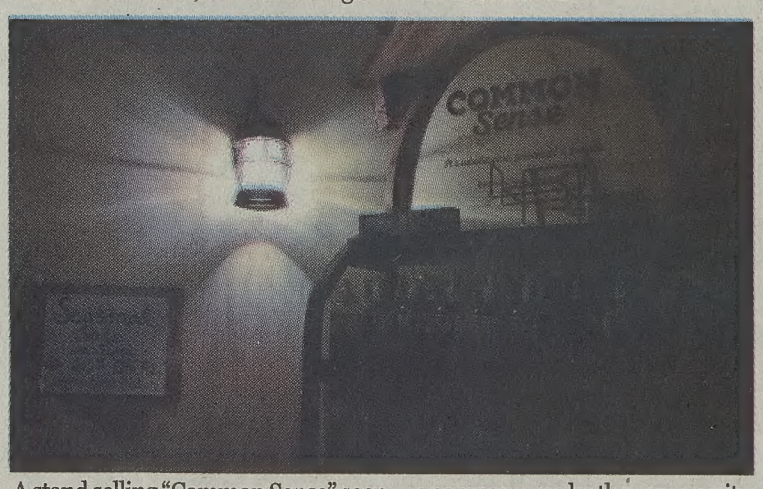
A mural inside the deli depicting the hippie movement.

Entrance to the workers-only section.

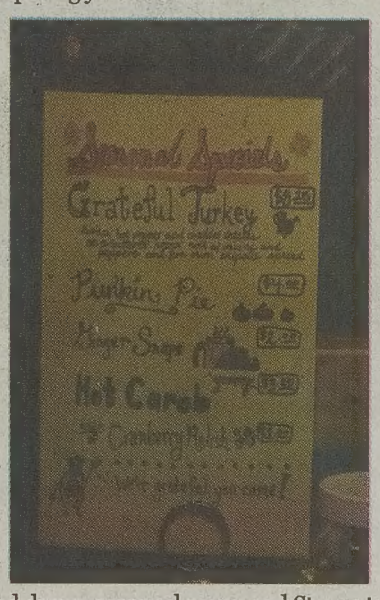


Barkai and Steven, the two managers of the Yellow Deli.




Decorations on the wall and Barkai preparing yerba maté.



A stand selling "Common Sense" soap — a company run by the community.



A sign outside the Yellow Deli, the hand drawn seasonal menu and Steven taking a call.

PHOTOS BY ATTICUS COATES